

Minutes of the Florida Keys Amateur Radio Club Meeting

K4FLK

November 5, 2025

Meeting was called to order at 7:11 PM at the Big Pine United Methodist Church.

Attendees: KA2BYU, WA4JSA, KW4FLA, K4VRZ, K2JCU, KB7ZDO, KQ4OOR, KQ4OOS, WA4JFJ, WA4JFK, Jeff Banning (new Tech!!!), Willy (Ham to be), K1ST

Via Zoom: N1BGK, AK4MM, KA4PPM, W8UF

VE Testing at 6PM: Nancy, KQ4OOR, passed her General and Jeff Banning passed his Technician Test. Congratulations to both. KQ4OOR can immediately use her new privileges and Jeff Banning awaits the reopening of the FCC to get his new callsign.

I want to thank KA2BYU, KW4FLA and WA4JSA before the Volunteer Examiners for the Test Session.



Picture above of Steve (right), K1ST, awarding the dual band FM handheld to newly licensed Ham Jeff Banning.

Old Business:

The [minutes](#) of the September Club Meeting were approved.

Treasurer, WA4JFK reported we have 36 paid members. The Club currently has \$3,040.39. The Club raised an additional \$2,054 for the Grassy Key VHF FM Repeater Antenna Project. A Big

Thank You to everyone who donated. KA2BYU brought the Antenna for the Grassy Key project that he purchased for the Club and Shirley wrote him a reimbursement check for \$254.

Please consider joining/renewing your membership. You can send a check to FKARC, 624 ASHE ST, KEY WEST, FL 33040-7111 or send a Zelle or Venmo payment to K1ST. Contact K1ST before sending funds. Annual dues are Twenty Dollars.

Club Swag. Club Swag. K1ST contacted Gold Medal regarding their Proposal but never heard back from them. **K1ST will pursue a local option that KR4IF suggested.**

Wacky Award Diploma. **There was interest in moving forward but requested tweaking of the award to make a little easier to obtain. Discussions will continue at the December Meeting.**

W4KWS is once again sponsoring a Keys QSO Party for December. One Point for a Repeater QSO (No Nets), 5 points for a simplex QSO (minimum 5 miles) and 20 points for a VARA FM Winlink QSO over the Repeaters. The winner will receive a new condition Motorola CDM1550LS UHF FM Mobile Radio pre-programmed for the Keys Repeaters. Winner to be announced at the January Club Meeting.





New Business:

GMRS Repeater Status from KA2BYU. ORC GMRS Repeater may have a blown Power Amplifier. **K1ST to check week of November 17th. The Key West GMRS Repeater is back online.**

Ham Repeater Status from K1ST. **We will be working to replace the KF4ACN at the Transfer Station on State Rd 905 with a FKARC Repeater. The initial repeater will be FM standalone only. Plan to make this change in early December. Stay tuned for developments.**

The tower crew will be in the Keys the week of November 17th that will be working on the Grassy Key Tower. The crew has multiple tasks so I don't have a planned start date at Grassy Key.

The current status of the Ham and GMRS Repeaters in the County can always be found on the [Repeaters Page](#) of the FKARC web site.

K1ST posted a new version of the Club Codeplug for the OpenGD77 based radios on the [Club Website](#). This version updates the Repeater names to reflect their new locations and a new GMRS on Cudjoe Key and fixes the PL for the KF4ACN (soon to be K4FLK) on State Road 905 MM5 in North Key Largo.

K4VRZ offered to donate several Baofeng BF-888S handhelds to the Club to be used for special events like the 7 Mile Bridge Run. Thank you Greg.

Club Elections. **No one expressed interest in running for Club office this year so the existing officer slate will remain in place. I want to thank the existing officers for their continued service.**

Club Christmas Party. **Only one person was interested so we won't move forward with a Holiday Party this year.**

Ten Minute Break

Jim, K2JCU, showed a portable J Pole that the Radio Club he belongs to in Pittsburg is making out of open wire line and 3D printed parts (see below). Jim says the antenna works quite well. The Pittsburg Club is selling them for \$20 for a single band version and \$25 for a dual band one. Contact [Jim](#) if you'd like to purchase one and he will bring it to the December Club Meeting.



Main Presentation:

The main discussion was a demo of the Winlink VARA FM System. He attempted a connection to the VARA FM Gateway at the Marathon EOC Radio Room. The signal was recognized by the Gateway but the connection was unsuccessful. Additional testing later shows that the Gateway does not appear to be working properly. K1ST will investigate

November 12th. K1ST will also post in the [User Forum](#) a document on how to install and configure an AIOC for use with VARA FM Winlink Gateway.

K1ST was also selling All in One Cables ([AIOC](#)) with cover for \$22 (at cost) and two foot USB-A cables with ferrite beads for \$8 (also at cost). These work well with most Kenwood Style connector handhelds like the Baofengs and the OpenGD77 based radios. The AIOC also acts as programming cable for the Baofeng radios that are programmed by [CHIRP](#).

Major events for the 2025-2026 season include:

Winter Field Day January 24th & 25th
Marathon Seafood Festival March 14th & 15th
Seven Mile Bridge Run April 5th
ARRL Field Day? June 27th & 28th

Any other events or activities we should be considering?

Upcoming

Next Ham Exam Test Sessions will be in Islamorada on November 15th at the Library and Stock Island on November 20th. You must sign up in advance [here](#).

The next [Club Meeting](#) will be on December 3rd and the topic will be the 2026 Budget. Please bring your ideas as to what the Club should be budgeting for in 2026.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Perpall, Secretary